

Navigating Housing Scams

A FIVE PART SERIES

Part 1: Rentals Scams

Kathy Hochul Governor Robert J. Rodriguez Secretary of State

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DID YOU KNOW?

In 2022, the FBI received **11,727** real estate/rental scam-related complaints, with losses of over **\$396** million, an **86**% increase compared to 2020.

Whether New Yorkers are renting, buying a first home, protecting their homes, planning a home improvement project, or looking for a moving or storage company, The Division of Consumer Protection provides tips to navigate scams and prevent you from falling victim to a scam.

In part one of a five-part money-saving series, we offer practical tips for navigating rental scams.





Tips To Prevent A Costly Mistake:

Confirm that the rental listing is legitimate and verify the source of the listing.

- Visit real estate websites and see if the rental you want is also listed in another city or available on another website with a different email address.
- Run a reverse image search and see if you can find that listing anywhere
 on the internet. If you find an identical listing with a different email
 address, that's a red flag that it's a scam.



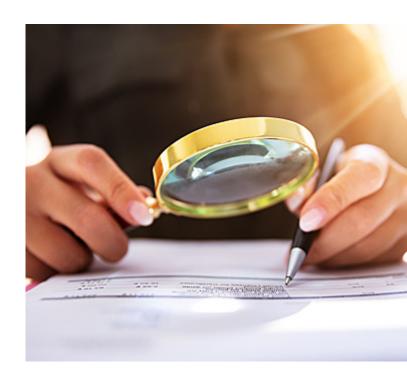


Tips To Prevent A Costly Mistake:

Verify the identity of any Real Estate Professional.

Confirm that the real estate professional you're working with is licensed in New York by following these steps:

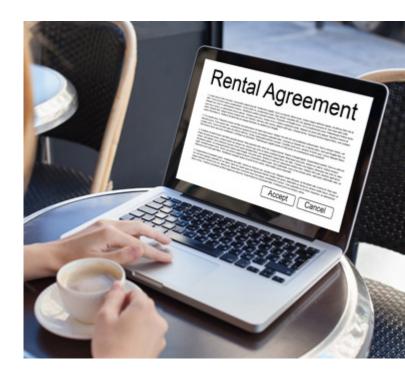
- <u>Visit the New York State Department of State Public License</u> <u>Search Database</u>
- Conduct an independent online search and check the phone number associated with their real estate license address. Call the number to verify.
- Request to see a copy of the Department of State-issued photo license and arrange an in-person or video meeting to compare the ID.





Take these additional steps to avoid rental scams:

- **Inspect the Premises:** Avoid completing background checks, signing a lease agreement, or paying any advance fees or deposits before having an opportunity to inspect the premises.
- Be suspicious of untraceable payment methods. Instead, pay by check or credit card and get receipts for any payments.
- Request everything in writing. Real estate professionals are required by law to provide you with copies of all instruments relating to the transaction.





Take these additional steps to avoid rental scams:

- Don't give in to high-pressure sales tactics. Scammers may urge you to rent quickly before someone else gets the property, possibly prompting you to miss an important step in the evaluation process.
- Protect your privacy. Scammers often request personal information and money for background checks, then disappear. Refrain from providing personal information or your social security number unless you are sure you are dealing with a reputable business or agent.





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